

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 151239Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1215

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 18140

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SP, US

SUBJECT: SPANISH BASE NEGOTIATIONS

REF: (A) STATE 162979 (B) MADRID 4677 (C) PARIS 17537

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING IS LIKELY TO HAVE SPOKEN VAGUELY TO FOREIGN MINISTER CORTINA ABOUT EVENTUAL SPANISH LINKS TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND NATO, BUT WE STRONGLY DOUBT THAT HE PROMISED EARLY ACTION. THE FRENCH FEEL THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER FROM A TACTICAL POINT OF VIEW TO WITHHOLD "EUROPEAN" BENEFITS FROM SPAIN UNTIL THEY CAN BE OFFERED TO A MERITORIOUS POST-FRANCO REGIME. ANY GISCARD-SCHMIDT COORDINATION ON SPANISH POLICY WILL PROBABLY BE ALONG THESE LINES AND NOT IN THE DIRECTION OF ANY EARLY OPENING TO FRANCO SPAIN. END SUMMARY.

1. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF FRENCH POLICY TOWARD SPAIN AT THE PRESENT TIME:

A. FRANCE WANTS TO HELP SPAIN OUT OF ITS ISOLATION FROM THE REST OF EUROPE AND ENCOURAGE A SMOOTH SUCCESSION AFTER FRANCO.

B. IT HAS BEEN GOF POLICY TO ENDORSE EVENTUAL SPANISH PARTICIPATION IN THE EC AND IN NATO, ALTHOUGH IT REALIZES THAT THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE UNDER FRANCO.

C. FRANCE BELIEVES THAT LITTLE SHOULD BE DONE

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FOR SPAIN BEFORE THE PROBLEM OF FRANCO'S SUCCESSION

IS SOLVED, ALTHOUGH POSSIBLE BASES FOR SUBSEQUENT RELATIONSHIPS SHOULD BE LAID NOW. THIS TACTIC IS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS THAT ANY GOVERNMENT WHICH BECOMES TOO CLOSE TO THE FRANCO REGIME NOW MAY HAVE SEVERE DIFFICULTIES WITH THE POST-FRANCO GOVERNMENT WHICH EVENTUALLY ESTABLISHES ITSELF IN MADRID. A COROLLARY TO THIS VIEW IS THE GOF BELIEF THAT FRANCO WILL NO LONGER BE IN POWER A YEAR FROM NOW. IN SHORT, HOLD THE EUROPEAN CARD IN RESERVE AND PLAY IT FOR THE SUCCESSORS.

D. WHILE WAITING FOR THE POST-FRANCO ERA, THE GOF WANTS TO MAINTAIN AND ENLARGE SPAIN'S IMPORTANT COMMERCIAL TIES WITH FRANCE.

E. AT THE PRESENT TIME, PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING IS RUMINATING ON POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO "EUROPEAN DEFENSE" WHILE KEEPING ALL OPTIONS OPEN.

F. THE IDEA OF A "SOUTHERN COUNTERWEIGHT" TO THE NORTHERN EUROPEAN PREDOMINANCE IN WESTERN EUROPE FASCINATES POLICY PLANNERS HERE AS DOES THE IDEA OF A NON-INSTITUTIONAL MEDITERRANEAN "COMMUNITY OF INTEREST." BUT WE FORESEE NO FRENCH INITIATIVES ALONG EITHER LINE AS LONG AS FRANCO REMAINS IN POWER AND THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM REMAINS VOLATILE.

2. AGAINST THE FOREGOING BACKGROUND, WE STRONGLY DOUBT THAT GISCARD MADE ANY SPECIFIC PROMISES TO CORTINA. AS PER REF C, EMBASSY CONCLUDED THAT LITTLE

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 151239Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1216

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 18140

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HAD COME OUT OF CORTINA'S RECENT VISIT TO PARIS.
WHILE WE ARE NOT INFORMED REGARDING CORTINA'S PRIVATE
CONVERSATIONS WITH GISCARD, CORTINA'S RAMBLING ACCOUNT
IN REF B PARA 8 INDICATES GISCARD WAS ENCOURAGING BUT
IMPRECISE. GISCARD KNOWS THAT, GIVEN THE ATTITUDES
OF HIS MAJOR EUROPEAN PARTNERS TOWARD NATO ON THE ONE
HAND AND SPAIN ON THE OTHER HAND, FRANCE IS IN NO
POSITION TO DELIVER ON PROMISES OF ENHANCING SPAIN'S
POSITION IN EUROPE. SPAIN WILL PROBABLY BE AN ITEM
ON THE GISCARD-SCHMIDT SUMMIT AGENDA IN LATE JULY, BUT
OTHER EUROPEAN ISSUES WILL NECESSARILY BE OF HIGHER
PRIORITY. WE BELIEVE FRANCE WILL BE WILLING TO EMBRACE
SPAIN INTIMATELY ONLY WHEN AND IF THERE HAS BEEN A
SMOOTH SUCCESSION FROM FRANCO TO A STABLE REGIME UNDER
CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAKE SPAIN ACCEPTABLE TO THE REST
OF THE ALLIANCE AND THE COMMUNITY. IN THE INTERIM, THE
FRENCH GOVERNMENT AT VARIOUS LEVELS WILL CONTINUE TO
DAZZLE SPANISH VISITORS WITH ATTRACTIVE BUT EVANESCENT
PROPOSALS FOR EVENTUAL SPANISH TIES TO EUROPE IN ORDER
TO KEEP DOORS OPEN, MAINTAIN CONTACT, AND ENHANCE THE
FLOW OF TRADE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY BASES, NEGOTIATIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PARIS18140
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750243-1198
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750755/aaaabxex.tel
Line Count: 137
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 STATE 162979, 75 MADRID 4677, 75 PARIS 17537
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <20 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPANISH BASE NEGOTIATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SP, US, (CHIRAC, JACQUES), (CORTINA MAURI, PEDRO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006